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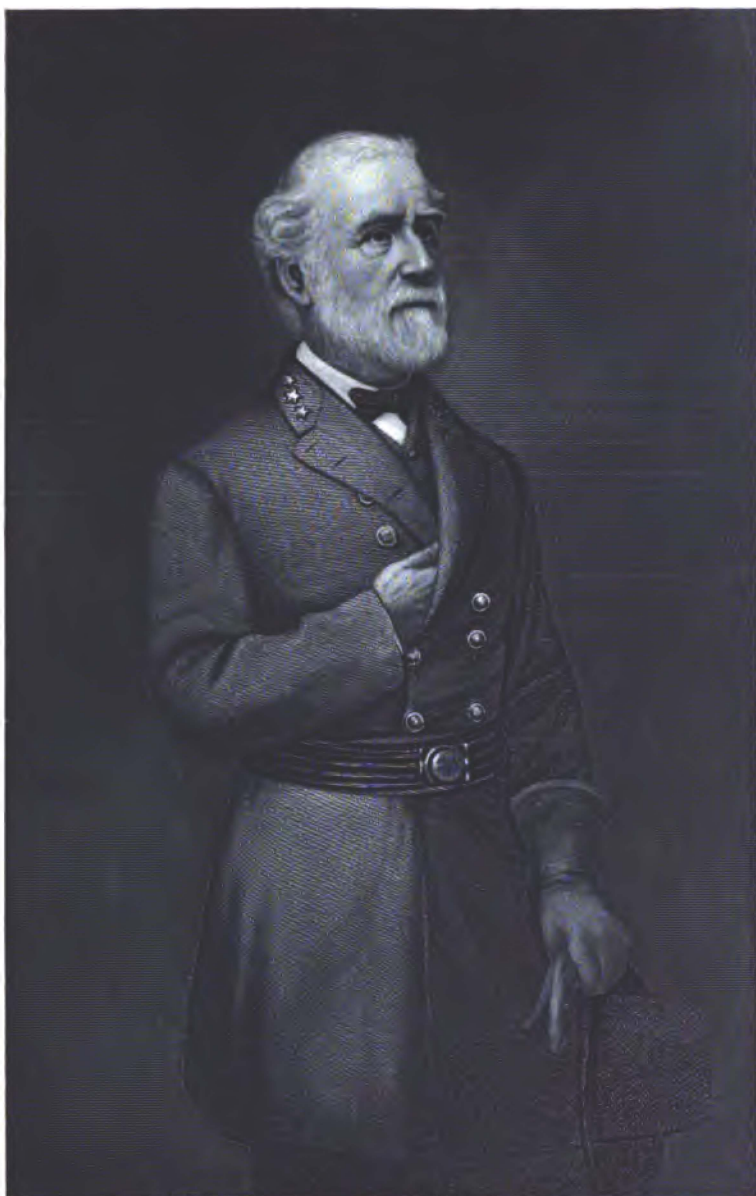
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GENERAL ROBERT E. LEE.

FROM THE PORTRAIT BY ELDREDGE, PRESENTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA  
BY THE STUDENTS OF THE SESSION OF 1870-71  
AND ALUMNI.

# WOMEN OF THE WORLD





6

# MEMOIRS OF ROBERT E. LEE

HIS MILITARY AND PERSONAL HISTORY

EMBRACING

A LARGE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED

*Compiled* BY  
A. L. LONG

FORMERLY MILITARY SECRETARY TO GEN. LEE, AFTERWARD BRIG.-GEN. AND CHIEF OF  
ARTILLERY SECOND CORPS, ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

TOGETHER WITH

INCIDENTS RELATING TO HIS PRIVATE LIFE SUBSEQUENT  
TO THE WAR

COLLECTED AND EDITED WITH THE ASSISTANCE

OF

MARCUS J. WRIGHT

FORMERLY BRIG.-GEN. ARMY OF TENNESSEE, AND AGENT OF THE UNITED STATES FOR  
THE COLLECTION OF CONFEDERATE RECORDS

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ILLUSTRATED.

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(FAC-SIMILE OF THE DEDICATION WRITTEN BY GENERAL LONG  
ON A SLATE USED BY THE BLIND.)

For the disabled soldiers  
- whose names are  
known to me with  
reason he has a right  
to sympathize the  
- author respectfully  
dedicates the following  
pages to the  
- disabled soldiers  
and to the

To the Disabled Confederate Soldiers,  
THE GALLANT MEN WITH WHOM HE HAS A RIGHT TO SYMPATHIZE,

THE AUTHOR RESPECTFULLY DEDICATES THE FOLLOWING PAGES.

A. L. LONG, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA.

JULY 28, 1896.



## PREFACE.

---

TO overcome the inactivity to which loss of sight has for some years subjected me, I have sought occupation in recording the recollection of familiar events. Having obtained a slate prepared for the use of the blind, I soon learned to write with a moderate degree of legibility. In order to excite a pleasing interest in my work, I undertook something that might prove of future benefit. Having served on General Lee's personal staff during the most important period of his military career, I began an eye-witness narrative of his campaigns in the war between the States. In the execution of my work I received valuable assistance from my wife and daughter, my two sons, and Miss Lucy Shackelford (now Mrs. Charles Walker), all of whom lovingly and faithfully served me as copyists and readers. I am also indebted to Colonel C. S. Venable of General Lee's staff, Major Green Peyton of Rodes's staff, and Major S. V. Southall of my own staff, for indispensable aid in reviewing my manuscript, informing me of facts that had not come to my knowledge or reminding me of such as had escaped my recollection. My work is now completed, and I offer it to the public, hoping it may prove of value as a record of events which passed under my own observation, and many of which have been described directly from my notes made at the time of their occurrence. It is not intended to be a history of the war in detail, but a statement of my personal knowledge of General Lee's life, actions, and character, and of the part played by him in the great events of which he was the ruling spirit.

After receiving my manuscript the publishers desired change of plan which would embrace some of the interesting social and domestic features of General Lee's life. This part of the work has been edited and conducted through an arrangement with the publishers by General Marcus J. Wright formerly of the Confederate Army of Tennessee, but now and for some years past, agent of the United States War Department for the collection of Confederate records. My wife has rendered important aid in this part of the work by contributing personal incidents and other valuable material obtained through her friendly relations with the family of General Lee. It is also proper to acknowledge the use of the publications of Rev. J. M. Jones, Colonel Walter H. Taylor, Miss Emily Mason, the Southern Historical Society papers, Swinton, and the Report of the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War (Federal). I have had occasion to refer to the *Memoirs* of General Grant and *The Campaigns of General J. E. B. Stuart*, by Major H. B. McClellan. I have been greatly encouraged in the publication of this work by the cordial concurrence of General G. W. Custis Lee, General W. H. F. Lee, Major R. E. Lee, Miss Mildred Lee, Governor Fitz Lee, and other members of the family.

I further desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to Colonel R. N. Scott, U. S. A., for opportunity afforded me at the War Records Office of studying official reports, maps, and the confidential letter-books of General Lee, relating to the events described in the present volume, many of which have never hitherto been published, and which will prove of great value and interest both in rightly understanding military operations and in estimating the character and genius of that great soldier.

A. L. LONG.

## PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

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GENERAL LEE, less fortunate than General Grant, was overtaken by death before he could complete his design of writing and publishing to the world his personal narrative of the important events in which he figured. In offering this work to the public the Publishers consider it a consummation of that intention, and they further believe that in the selection of General Long as the writer these Memoirs become as nearly an autobiography as any it would be possible to obtain from another hand than that of General Lee himself.

It was only during the last years of his life that General Lee seriously contemplated writing a history of his campaigns. He had been repeatedly urged to do so by friends, was offered large inducements by publishers, and even from foreign countries came urgent requests for his story. To most of these solicitations he returned a negative answer. Under date of October 25, 1865, he says: "I cannot now undertake the work you propose, nor can I enter into an engagement which I may never be able to accomplish. It will be some time before the truth can be known, and I do not think that time has yet arrived." To a request from a German officer for the right of translation he writes on March 13, 1866: "It has been my desire to write a history of the campaigns in Virginia, but I have not yet been able to commence it." It would appear that he began to collect materials for this purpose shortly after this date, and wrote to the various corps and division commanders asking reports of operations for the last campaigns of the war. He writes to Colonel Taylor, his late adjutant-general: "I am desirous that the bravery and devotion of the Army of Northern Virginia shall be correctly transmitted to posterity. This

is the only tribute that can now be paid to the worth of its noble officers and soldiers."

That the desire expressed in these letters became a settled intention, and that General Lee had made some progress in the collection of material, is shown in a letter to Mr. C. F. Lee, Jr., which is kindly placed at our service:

"LEXINGTON, VA., 6th June, 1870.

"MY DEAR CASSIUS: I am very much obliged to you for your letter of the 1st and the interest you evince in the character of the people of the South and their defence of the rights which they believed were guaranteed by the Constitution. The reputation of individuals is of minor importance to the opinion which posterity may form of the motives which governed the South in their late struggle for the maintenance of the principles of the Constitution. I hope, therefore, a true history will be written and justice be done them. A history of the military events of the period would also be desirable. I have had it in view to write one of the campaigns in Virginia, in which I was more particularly engaged. I have already collected some materials for the work, but lack so much that I wish to obtain that I have not commenced the narrative. I am very much obliged to you for the offer of the materials which you have collected. I think it probable that I have all the official reports, and I would not like to resort to any other source for a statement of facts. . . .

"I am, very truly, your cousin,

"R. E. LEE.

"C. F. LEE, JR., Alexandria, Va."

General Lee's death occurred four months after the date of this letter, and there was found to be but little done in the fulfilment of his expressed purpose.

The narrative of General Long includes many valuable contributions made by the members of General Lee's family, and is, in the main, based upon his own notes made at the time of the occurrences spoken of. The writer, moreover, had the advantage of an intimate personal association with General Lee under conditions which ensured the most perfect mutual con-

fidence and trust. The following letter to General Long expresses how high an opinion of the author was entertained by General Lee, and how desirous he was to associate him with himself in the coming campaigns:

"RICHMOND, 19th Apr., 1862.

"MY DEAR MAJOR: I have taken the liberty to apply for your appointment as my military secretary, which you may have observed, under a late law of Congress, has the rank and pay of colonel of cavalry. I had endeavored to obtain your promotion in another way which probably would have been more agreeable to you, but, failing in that, I have taken this course. If confirmed by the Senate, I will inform you, and you must let me know whether the situation is agreeable to you. If it is not and you prefer remaining where you are, or if any other situation is more agreeable to you, let me know, and I will do what I can to obtain it for you. At all events, understand not to consider yourself obliged to accept the one offered. . . .

"Yours truly,

"R. E. LEE.

"MAJOR A. L. LONG."

The delicacy with which this offer of personal service was made marks a distinguishing characteristic of the writer.

The acceptance by General Long began an acquaintance and service which closed only with the close of the war. Shortly afterward General Long received from General Lee the following testimonial:

"General A. L. Long entered the Confederate service in 1861, and has served continuously till the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, 9th April, 1865. His conduct during that time has been marked by zeal and gallantry. A graduate of the Military Academy at West Point, in addition to a military education, he has long experience in the military service.

"He was with me as chief of artillery in the winter of 1861-62 in the Southern department, and became a member of my staff when appointed to the command of the Army of Northern Virginia. He was promoted brigadier-general in 1863, and made

chief of artillery of the Second Army Corps, Army of Northern Virginia, which position he held till the surrender of the army, 9th April, 1865.

R. E. LEE,  
"General."

In the preparation of these memoirs the author has been influenced by the intention of General Lee as indicated in the foregoing letters. He has sought to include only such accounts of the military operations as were legitimate subjects of record and were confirmed by General Lee's reports. Contributions of a personal nature from relatives, friends, and associates have been included in the text, as serving to illustrate the traits of character which made Lee so famous in his generation.

The addition to General Long's work of the official reports of General Lee, as well as of a great number of confidential letters and despatches which form the only official record of the movements and operations of the Army of Northern Virginia for the period which they cover, will give to this work unique interest and exceptional value. Letters and confidential extracts from the private letter-books of General Lee, heretofore unpublished, as well as the returns of organization of the army and tables of reports of its strength, have been placed at the service of General Long through the courtesy of Colonel R. N. Scott, at the head of the Bureau of War Records in Washington.

The assistance given by General Marcus J. Wright in the compilation of records and returns, and especially in the preparation of the chapters relating to the last years of General Lee's life, has been of great importance and service, and materially contributes to the completeness and the value of the work.

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# MEMOIRS OF ROBERT E. LEE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *GENEALOGY.*

The Lee Family.—Richard Lee Emigrates to Virginia.—“President Lee.”—His Celebrated Sons.—Henry Lee and his Descendants.—The Military and Civil Record of “Light-horse Harry.”—An Affecting Incident.—Prominence of the Lee Family.

IT is the boast of American society and civilization that men have risen to eminence in nearly all departments of life unaided by the advantages incidental to hereditary preferment. Nevertheless, the people of this country do not fail to place a proper value on respectable and illustrious lineage, and when a man in any way or through any circumstances has attained distinction in the world, there is a natural curiosity in the minds of his countrymen to know both his origin and the history of those from whom he has descended.

General Robert E. Lee comes of a family illustrious in both England and America—one, as history attests, worthy of him as he was worthy of it. But his renown is due mainly to the part he himself has played both in peace and war, which has at once reflected honor on the memory of his ancestors and added to his own name a noble distinction of which his descendants may justly be proud.

To those who have the curiosity or desire to know “from whence came this Virginian,” it is proper to state that his ancestry may be clearly traced to the Norman Conquest. The founder of the family, Launcelot Lee, came originally from

Loudun, France. He entered England with William the Conqueror, distinguished himself at the battle of Hastings, and acquired an estate in Essex.

A later member of the family, Lionel Lee, took part in the third Crusade, following Richard Cœur de Lion in 1192 to Palestine, at the head of a company of "gentlemen cavaliers." He displayed great gallantry at the siege of Acre, and in return for his services was made earl of Litchfield, while another estate, afterward called "Ditchly," was bestowed upon the family. The armor worn by Lionel Lee in the crusade may still be seen in the Horse Armory of the Tower of London.

The line of descent of General Lee can be traced directly from Richard Lee, a younger son of the earl of Litchfield, who was the fifth from Sir Henry Lee, knight of the Garter in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. This Richard Lee in 1641, during the reign of Charles I. of England, came to America as colonial secretary under the governorship of Sir William Berkeley. He was possessed of a handsome person, fine talents, and popular manners, and by these qualities was enabled to secure influence over the colonists. He aided Sir William in keeping Virginia firm in her allegiance to the Crown during the civil war between the Cavaliers and Roundheads. After the triumph of the latter he was of great assistance to the governor in making the most advantageous terms with the Protector, Cromwell, through an acknowledgment of the authority of the Commonwealth, which in return conferred free sovereignty on Virginia.

It will thus be seen that the Lees were at once and at this early period of history fully identified with the country of their adoption.

The county of Westmoreland, with its diversity of hill and dale, its mild climate, fertile soil, and attractive scenery, at an early period won the attention of the Washingtons, Fairfaxes, Lees, and other distinguished families, and they naturally established their homes in this attractive situation. Here they evinced many of the traits, characteristics, and customs of English society. Frequently they made the country ring with the merry sound of the horn and the hound as they swept through field and wood in pursuit of the wily fox or the bound-

ing stag. In the life and habits of these people and others of like descent and customs was formed the germ of that martial spirit which characterizes what is called the "chivalry of Virginia." In later days General Lee has been heard to relate with enthusiasm how as a boy he had followed the hunt (not infrequently on foot) for hours over hill and valley, without fatigue. These exhilarating exercises tended to greatly strengthen the limbs, expand the chest, and give vigor to a constitution which in after-life rendered him able to endure the greatest hardships of war.

Richard Lee, second son of the Richard above named, was born in Virginia in 1646. He was educated in England, graduated in law, and returned to Virginia, where he took an active part in the colonial legislation. His fourth son, Thomas Lee, was one of the first of the family to establish himself in the county of Westmoreland. He attained high distinction both in America and England, and grew to be one of the most prominent men in the early history of Virginia, in which province he became successively president of the council and governor of the colony, being the first native-born American who held the latter office under the British Crown. He is known in colonial history as "President Lee." The fine mansion of Stratford in Westmoreland county, the birthplace of several famous members of the family, was built for Thomas Lee by the East India Company, aided by an ample donation from the privy purse of Queen Caroline, his previous residence having been burned. This edifice still stands, and is very substantially built, the walls of the first story being two and a half feet thick, and those of the second story two feet. It contained originally about seventeen rooms, though one writer credits it with one hundred rooms, and another declares that the stables contained one hundred stalls for horses.

Thomas Lee died in 1756. He left eight children, six sons and two daughters. Several of his sons occupied prominent places in the colonial history of America. Three of them, Richard Henry, Francis Lightfoot, and Arthur Lee, deserve particular mention from their connection with our Revolutionary history.

Richard Henry Lee early entered the House of Burgesses of

Virginia, and afterward became a distinguished member of the Continental Congress. To him is due that stirring resolution of the 10th of June, 1776, which proclaimed to the world that America was full-grown and ready to take its allotted place in the family of nations—the resolution “that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown; and that all political connection between them and Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally absolved.”

Francis Lightfoot Lee was also a member of the Continental Congress, and was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence; while Arthur Lee was sent on an important foreign mission on behalf of the new republic.

Returning to Richard Lee, of the second generation of the family in America, and the father of Thomas Lee just described, we must now consider the descent of his fifth son, Henry, the direct ancestor of the subject of these memoirs. Henry Lee filled no prominent place in colonial history. His life was that of a student, though, like his brothers, he occupied a seat in the early councils of the colony. He married a Miss Bland, and had three children, of whom we are concerned only with the second son, Henry.

This Henry Lee became a member of the House of Burgesses, and took an active part in all the exciting political events of the time. He was married in 1753 to Lucy Grymes, reported to be a descendant of General Thomas Grymes of Cromwell's army. He left a large family, six sons and five daughters, the oldest of whom, born in 1756, near Dumfries on the Potomac, bore the name of his father, and in addition to the distinguished part he performed in the Revolutionary War attained the higher distinction of being the father of Robert E. Lee, the noblest figure of a long and illustrious line.

At an early age this third Henry Lee in direct descent was sent to Princeton College, where he distinguished himself as a student. He was preparing for the practice of the law, and was just about embarking for England to pursue his studies, when hostilities with the mother-country changed his plans. He was then nineteen years of age. Abandoning his inten-

tion of going to England, he raised a company of cavalry, and soon after the battle of Lexington joined Washington. His energy and ability quickly gained for him a high reputation. Speedily promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, he was assigned to the command of an independent corps composed of infantry and cavalry, known as "Lee's Legion." His services were conspicuous during the war, and at the close of the Revolution no one had acquired a more permanent and deserved reputation than "Light-horse Harry." About the year 1781 he married his cousin, the daughter of Col. Philip Ludwell Lee of Stratford. Soon after the close of the war he was elected to Congress, and afterward became governor of Virginia, to which office he was three times elected. He was one of those who earnestly favored General Washington as the first President.

About the year 1790 he lost his wife, who had borne him four children, all of whom died in childhood except his son Henry. From the office of governor he returned to private life, and was subsequently married to Mrs. Anne Hill Carter, daughter of Mr. Charles Carter of Shirley. On account of the political agitation of the country he was again induced to enter public life, and in the winter of 1798-99 he became a member of the General Assembly. He was also re-elected to Congress, notwithstanding the tide of opposition then running against the Federals.

On the death of General Washington he prepared the eulogy, by direction of Congress, in which occur the memorable words which have become indissolubly attached to the name of the hero of the Revolution: "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

The children of his second marriage were Charles Carter Lee of Powhattan; Sidney Smith Lee, a commander in the United States navy in 1860, and afterward of the Confederate States navy; General Robert Edward Lee; and two daughters, Anne and Mildred.

Of these children, Robert Edward was born in the Stratford mansion, and in the same room in which were born two of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Richard Henry and

Francis Lightfoot Lee. In 1811, Henry Lee removed with his family to Alexandria for the purpose of educating his children, and whilst here was offered and accepted a major-general's commission in the United States army during the second war with England. In 1814 he was in Baltimore, the guest of Mr. Alexander C. Hansen, at the time when the house of that gentleman was attacked by a mob. His visitor took part in the defence of the house, in which duty he received serious injuries, from whose effects he never recovered.

About the close of the year 1817 declining health induced him to visit the West Indies, but finding that the tropical climate did not afford him the relief he expected, he determined to return to his native shores. While on his return voyage, failing strength caused him to direct his course to the coast of Georgia, and to claim the hospitality of the daughter of his old friend and comrade, General Greene, who occupied her father's residence on Cumberland Island. After lingering a short time at this hospitable mansion, his noble spirit took its flight to join those who had preceded him. Nearly half a century later that event was brought in the most striking manner to the knowledge of the writer of this work, who was then accompanying General Lee, during the Civil War, on a tour of inspection along the coasts of Georgia and Florida. While passing through the channel that separates Cumberland Island from the main land, the steamer stopped at a plantation wharf, and the general then asked me to accompany him on a sacred mission. After following for some distance a road shaded with live-oak and magnolia, we passed through a gate opening into extensive grounds dotted with groups of olive, orange, and lemon trees, intermingled with brilliant subtropical shrubbery. In the midst of these grounds arose an extensive pile of buildings whose unfinished state bore evidence that the design of the projector exceeded his means of execution. This was the residence of General Greene. We entered a spacious hall, and after admiring for a moment the richly-carved frames of the ample windows that lighted it and the stairway that wound its spiral course along the unfinished walls of shell and mortar, we descended a flight of steps into a garden, which, though neglected, exhibited signs

of taste and cultivation. Passing on, we came to a dilapidated wall enclosing a neglected cemetery. The general then, in a voice of emotion, informed me that he was visiting the grave of his father. He went alone to the tomb, and after a few moments of silence plucked a flower and slowly retraced his steps, leaving the lonely grave to the guardianship of the crumbling stones and the spirit of the restless waves that perpetually beat against the neighboring shore. We returned in silence to the steamer, and no allusion was ever made to this act of filial devotion.

The brief genealogical record here given might have been greatly extended had it seemed desirable to present in full detail the posts of honor obtained and the distinguished services performed by the ancestors of Robert E. Lee. The few facts we have stated will suffice to show the prominent position held by the Lees in England, and their essential influence and importance in the colonial history of Virginia and in the struggle through which the independence of America was achieved. Always on the patriotic side, and doing noble duty alike in the legislative hall and on the battlefield, they stand high among the leaders in that series of great events through which the fetters of tyranny were broken and another star added to the galaxy of civilized nations. Alike in England and America this family has always occupied an honorable position and been held in high esteem, and the pages of its history are nowhere sullied by a deed of which any of its members need to be ashamed. From the date of its origin members of the family have gained distinction as warriors, until, through Launcelot Lee, Lionel Lee, and "Light-horse Harry," the culminating point is reached in Robert E. Lee, the greatest commander of modern times, and a military genius who may fairly be placed in comparison with the noted captains of the world as in some respects the noblest and ablest of them all.

## CHAPTER II.

### *EARLY LIFE.*

Birth and Boyhood of Robert E. Lee.—Sent to West Point.—Descriptive Letter.—He is appointed Lieutenant of Engineers.—His Marriage.—Testimony of Friends as to his Character.—His Engineering Service at St. Louis.—Stationed in New York Harbor.

ROBERT EDWARD LEE, the fourth child of General Henry Lee, was born at Stratford, the ancient manor-house of the Lee family in Virginia, on the 19th of January, 1807. His name was taken from those of his maternal uncles, Robert and Edward Carter of Shirley.

In order to avail himself of better opportunities for the education of his children, General Lee left Stratford when his son Robert was four years old and removed to Alexandria. In this city the family lived successively on Cameron street, on Orinoco street, and in the house known as The Parsonage. Persons are yet living who remember Robert Lee in those his days of childhood, and who have an abiding recollection of his thoughtfulness of character and of his earnestness in the performance of every duty.

He was, indeed, in a somewhat trying position for one of his tender years. His father had been compelled, through declining health, to repair to the West Indies in search of relief, while his mother was a confirmed invalid. Of his brothers, one was a student at Harvard, another was in the navy; one of his sisters was in delicate health, and for a considerable period absent from home, while the other was too young to be of much use in household duties; so that many domestic cares fell upon Robert. Though but eleven years of age at the period of his father's death, the boy was old beyond his years, and of a thoughtfulness, a sense of filial obligation, and a warm affection for his parents that aided him to accept respon-

sibilities and perform duties of which few boys of his age would have been capable.

Little is known of the events of his early life, but that little redounds to his credit. His character at this period is admirably summarized in a passage of a letter written by his father from the West Indies: "Robert, who was always good, will be confirmed in his happy turn of mind by his ever-watchful and affectionate mother."

It is undoubted, indeed, that the lessons of this judicious and loving mother bore an important part in the formation of the estimable character which her noble son in after years displayed. *She taught him in his years of childhood to "practise self-denial and self-control, as well as the strictest economy in all financial concerns"*—lessons which were destined to bear ample fruit in his subsequent life.

As we have said, many of the cares of the household devolved upon the child, who did the marketing, attended to housekeeping duties, managed outdoor affairs, looked after his mother's horses, and acted the "little man" to an extent and with a discretion unusual in a boy of his age.

*His warm affection for his mother undoubtedly had its share in this devotion to duties usually distasteful to growing lads, and it was particularly shown in the pathetically earnest care which he took of this patient invalid. Discarding schoolboy frolics, he would hurry home from his studies to see that his mother had her daily drive, and might be seen carrying her to her carriage, affectionately arranging her cushions, and earnestly endeavoring to entertain her, gravely assuring her that unless she was cheerful she would derive no benefit from her airing.*

In confirmation of the statements here made we are fortunately enabled to give the testimony of near relatives of Robert E. Lee as to his youthful character and habits. From one of his cousins we have the following interesting remarks:

"I remember him well as a boy at school to Mr. Leary at the Alexandria Academy, and afterward at school to Mr. Hallowell when his school was in the house now occupied by Mr. Turner, and his mother lived next door. I recollect his uniformly correct deportment at school and elsewhere, and his attention to

his studies. [What impressed me most in my youthful days was his devotion to his mother, who, as you know, was for many years an invalid; she used to say he was son and daughter to her. He was her housekeeper, relieved her of all domestic cares, looked after the horses, rode out in the carriage with her, and did the marketing for the family.]

Another cousin offers the following testimony in a letter addressed to Mrs. Lee after the death of her noble husband:

"Aunt Lee's health was bad: your husband was everything to her. He kept house under his mother's directions. She was one of the most methodical and beautiful of managers, always cheerful and dignified. I think Robert's disposition was very like his mother's.

"You remember Nat, who was Aunt Lee's dining-room servant: after her death his health became very bad; your husband took him to the South, had the best medical advice, comfortable room, and everything that could be done to restore him, and attended to him himself. When your husband was going to Mr. Hallowell's school he would come out at twelve o'clock, have their carriage gotten, and go out with aunt to ride, doing and saying everything to amuse her. In her last illness he mixed every dose of medicine she took, and he nursed her night and day. If Robert left the room she kept her eyes on the door till he returned. He never left her but for a short time."

An incident related by one of his friends strikingly shows the high moral sense to which he had early attained, and the influence which it exerted upon all with whom he came into contact. At that period life in Virginia retained much of the rollicking character of its eighteenth-century conditions, and the boy chanced, during a vacation, to find himself an invited guest in a house where these undesirable customs were kept up. The host was a fascinating gentleman, possessed of all graces of mind and manner, yet, while not dissipated, his mode of life was such as to shock the sterner sense of morality of his youthful visitor. Robert made no comment on what he saw, but his unspoken rebuke proved more efficacious than any words of reproach could have done. The night before his

departure his host came to his bedside, and in affecting language sought to excuse himself for the wild life into which he had fallen. He offered his sorrow for the loss of those dearest to him as a reason for habits which he could not seek to defend, and he impressively warned his young guest to beware of similar habits, advised him to persist in his commendable course of life, and earnestly promised that he would himself endeavor to reform if but to render himself worthy of the respect and affection of one of so estimable a character.

In his school-duties Robert was as diligent, attentive, and methodical as at home. Mr. William B. Leary, an Irish gentleman, was his first teacher. Shortly after the war a meeting took place between the teacher and his now-famous pupil at Lexington, and again when General Lee was returning from Géorgia his old teacher came from a long distance to meet him, and they had a very pleasant interview.

When the growing youth reached an age in which it became necessary to seriously consider his future life and vocation, he himself seems to have selected the military profession, and decided to make an application for admission to West Point. His object in this was partly the desire to relieve his mother of the burden of his support, but there is reason to believe that the army was his deliberate choice as a profession, and that his mind had a natural tendency toward military science, to which it proved in after years to be so peculiarly adapted. When it was fully decided that he should prepare himself for admission to West Point he was sent with this object to the school of Mr. Benjamin Hallowell, an able teacher of mathematics and well suited to give the youthful aspirant the necessary preliminary education. His record in this school can best be shown by the following letter from Mr. Hallowell:

"Robert E. Lee entered my school in Alexandria, Va., in the winter of 1824-25, to study mathematics preparatory to his going to West Point. He was a most exemplary student in every respect. He was never behind-time at his studies; never failed in a single recitation; was perfectly observant of the rules and regulations of the institution; was gentlemanly, unobtrusive, and respectful in all his deportment to teachers and his

fellow-students. His specialty was finishing up. He imparted a finish and a neatness, as he proceeded, to everything he undertook. One of the branches of mathematics he studied with me was conic sections, in which some of the diagrams were very complicated. He drew the diagrams on a slate; and although he well knew that the one he was drawing would have to be removed to make room for another, he drew each one with as much accuracy and finish, lettering and all, as if it were to be engraved and printed. The same traits he exhibited at my school he carried with him to West Point, where, I have been told, he never received a mark of demerit, and graduated at the head of his class."

We may add here one further passage from the letter of his cousin to Mrs. Lee, which gives some interesting information on this point in Robert E. Lee's life:

"I know your dead husband was most anxious to go to West Point, both to relieve his mother and to have a military education. Your aunt Lewis interested herself very much in obtaining his commission, and took him to Washington and introduced him to General Jackson. He was so much pleased with our beloved Robert that he got him his appointment."

In 1825, when he was eighteen years of age, he entered West Point as a cadet. Concerning his life while in this institution we have little information. It was undoubtedly that of an earnest and diligent student, too absorbed in his studies to have many social relaxations or to indulge in any of those truant escapades which are apt to form the telling events in schoolboy life. In respect to his standing at this institution interesting information is volunteered by Colonel Macomb, U. S. A., who entered the Military Academy in 1828, the year before Lee's graduation. He found that Cadet Robert E. Lee was then the prominent figure in the corps of cadets, being adjutant of battalion. Yet the formality which has always existed between "plebs" and older classes permitted only admiration at a distance, and this admiration only ripened into intimate acquaintanceship five years afterward when the two young men met in Washington.

In the year 1829, at the completion of his four years' course,

he graduated, bearing off the second highest honors of the institution. During his whole course he had never received a demerit mark for any breach of rules or neglect of duty. He was highly esteemed by his comrades, and was noted for studious habits and commendable conduct. He avoided tobacco and intoxicating liquors, used no profane or immoral language, and throughout his whole student-life performed no act which his pious mother could not have fully approved.

Throughout his whole life, indeed, he never used tobacco, and, though in rare cases he would drink a glass of wine, he strictly avoided whiskey or brandy and did his utmost to favor temperance in others. The intemperate habits of many of the persons under his command were always a source of pain to him, and several anecdotes are told of his quiet manner of administering reproof to young men who had over-indulged in strong liquor. Indeed, on more than one occasion he refused to promote officers addicted to intoxication, saying, "I cannot consent to place in the control of others one who cannot control himself."

Immediately after his graduation he received the appointment of second lieutenant of Engineers in the army of the United States, and was employed for several years thereafter on the seacoast defences in engineering duty.

It may be well to append at this point some interesting extracts from a letter which the writer has received from a near relative of General Lee, which are of special value as the testimony of one who was closely associated with him in his youth, and as serving to fill out the somewhat meagre information heretofore extant concerning the events of his early life :

"My first recollection of Robert Lee was during his mother's residence in Alexandria. His father was absent at the time, I think, in the West Indies, from which trip he never returned. I have no recollection of ever seeing him. From my earliest remembrance of my aunt she was a very delicate woman, and was thus left at the death of General Lee with the entire charge of five children, Carter, Anne, Smith, Robert, and Mildred. Robert, when I first remember him, was, I should say, a youth of some fifteen or sixteen years. I was frequently with the

Arlington family at my aunt's, but, being very young, passing events made very little impression on my mind. Robert was six years my senior, and when there my intercourse was principally with Bella Carter, our cousin, who lived with them for a time, while Robert and Mildred would be engrossed with Mary Custis. I remember hearing Robert spoken of frequently as a youth of great promise, his devotion to his mother and the help he afforded her in all her business and household matters commented on with admiration—particularly his devotion to his sister Anne, afterward Mrs. Judge Marshall of Baltimore. The first time I remember being struck with his manly beauty and attractiveness of manner was when he returned home after his first two years at West Point. He came with his mother and family on a visit to my father's. He was dressed in his cadet uniform of West Point, gray with white bullet buttons, and every one was filled with admiration of his fine appearance and lovely manners. I think he was about nineteen. Again, I remember being for some time with him at my grandfather Randolph's in Fauquier. I think it was the fall after he graduated. The house was filled with the young people of the family of both sexes. He was very much matured since I had last seen him, splendid-looking—as full of life, fun, and particularly of teasing, as any of us.

“But I have often said since he entered on his brilliant career that, although we all admired him for his remarkable beauty and attractive manners, I did not see anything in him that prepared me for his so far outstripping all his compeers. The first time this idea presented itself to me was during one of my visits to Arlington after my marriage. We were all seated around the table at night, Robert reading. I looked up and my eye fell upon his face in perfect repose, and the thought at once passed through my mind: ‘You certainly look more like a great man than any one I have ever seen.’ The same idea presented itself to me as I looked at him in Christ Church, Alexandria, during the same visit. Again, he spent some time at my father's in the fall of 1831, shortly after his own marriage and just before mine. He was then, as of old, bright, animated, and charming. I did not see him again

until, I think, the fall of 1836. He was returning from the Springs with his wife, who was in distressing ill-health, and I never saw a man so changed and saddened. It has always been painful to me to think of him as he was then. The last time I saw Robert Lee, except for a short time at Richmond on his way to the South the spring before his death, was at my own house the summer after the Mexican War. He was then looking very well, and was more than usually agreeable and interesting from his fund of anecdote connected with the war, which was of course at that time fresh in his memory. In closing I will make one more statement, which is, that I knew Robert Lee from the time I can first recollect, and I never remember hearing him censured for anything in my life."

Another letter from the same writer furnishes the following interesting quotation :

"There is one more trait in General Lee's character which I must mention here, which was his beautiful neatness and love of order. Young men are very apt to think it beneath them, and *little*, to give much attention to these small matters, and I have often brought up to those of my own family the beautiful neatness of Robert Lee. His wife told me, after his return from the Mexican War, that he had brought back every article of clothing he had taken with him, and a bottle of brandy which he had taken in case of sickness, *unopened*."

The Mary Custis referred to in the foregoing letter was the daughter and heiress of Washington Parke Custis of Arlington and granddaughter of the wife of General Washington. For years Robert Lee had been an occasional visitor at Arlington, and while he was yet a boy had been strongly attracted to the lovely young heiress—an intimacy which ripened into love as the youthful pair approached years of maturity. Mary Custis had received a fine classical education, and with the accompanying advantages of wealth and position was deemed by her father worthy of a match superior to that offered by a young man devoted to a military career. Yet the handsome cadet captured the heart of the Virginia heiress, and he returned to West Point from a visit home the plighted lover of Mary Custis. It was the first love for them both, and was destined to be a